



Storm Water Phase II Final Rule

Public Education and Outreach Minimum Control Measure

Storm Water Phase II Final Rule Fact Sheet Series

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This fact sheet profiles the Public Education and Outreach minimum control measure, one of six measures an operator of a Phase II-regulated small municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) is required to include in its storm water management program to meet the conditions of its National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) storm water permit. This fact sheet outlines the Phase II Final Rule requirements and offers some general guidance on how to satisfy them. It is important to keep in mind that the regulated small MS4 operator has a great deal of flexibility in choosing exactly how to satisfy the minimum control measure requirements.

Why Is Public Education and Outreach Necessary?

An informed and knowledgeable community is crucial to the success of a storm water management program since it helps to ensure the following:

- **Greater support** for the program as the public gains a greater understanding of the reasons why it is necessary and important. Public support is particularly beneficial when operators of small MS4s attempt to institute new funding initiatives for the program or seek volunteers to help implement the program; and
- **Greater compliance** with the program as the public becomes aware of the personal responsibilities expected of them and others in the community, including the individual actions they can take to protect or improve the quality of area waters.

What Is Required?

To satisfy this minimum control measure, the operator of a regulated small MS4 needs to:

- ☐ Implement a public education program to distribute educational materials to the community, or conduct equivalent outreach activities about the impacts of storm water discharges on local waterbodies and the steps that can be taken to reduce storm water pollution; and
- ☐ Determine the appropriate best management practices (BMPs) and measurable goals for this minimum control measure. Some program implementation approaches, BMPs (i.e., the program actions/activities), and measurable goals are suggested below.

What Are Some Guidelines for Developing and Implementing This Measure?

Three main action areas are important for successful implementation of a public education and outreach program:

① ***Forming Partnerships***

Operators of regulated small MS4s are encouraged to enter into partnerships with other governmental entities to fulfill this minimum control measure's requirements. It is generally more cost-effective to use an existing program, or to develop a new regional or state-wide education program, than to have numerous operators developing their own local programs. Operators also are encouraged to seek assistance from non-governmental organizations (e.g., environmental, civic, and industrial organizations), since many already have educational materials and perform outreach activities.

② ***Using Educational Materials and Strategies***

Operators of regulated small MS4s may use storm water educational information provided by their State, Tribe, EPA Region, or environmental, public interest, or trade organizations instead of developing their own materials. Operators should strive to make their materials and activities relevant to local situations and issues, and incorporate a variety of strategies to ensure maximum coverage. Some examples include:

- ***Brochures or fact sheets*** for general public and specific audiences;
- ***Recreational guides*** to educate groups such as golfers, hikers, paddlers, climbers, fishermen, and campers;
- ***Alternative information sources***, such as web sites, bumper stickers, refrigerator magnets, posters for bus and subway stops, and restaurant placemats;
- ***A library of educational materials*** for community and school groups;
- ***Volunteer citizen educators*** to staff a ***public education task force***;
- ***Event participation*** with educational displays at home shows and community festivals;
- ***Educational programs*** for school-age children;
- ***Storm drain stenciling*** of storm drains with messages such as "Do Not Dump - Drains Directly to Lake;"
- ***Storm water hotlines*** for information and for citizen reporting of polluters;
- ***Economic incentives*** to citizens and businesses (e.g., rebates to homeowners purchasing mulching lawnmowers or biodegradable lawn products); and
- ***Tributary signage*** to increase public awareness of local water resources.

③ ***Reaching Diverse Audiences***

The public education program should use a mix of appropriate local strategies to address the viewpoints and concerns of a variety of audiences and communities, including minority and disadvantaged communities, as well as children. Printing posters and brochures in more than one language or posting

large warning signs (e.g., cautioning against fishing or swimming) near storm sewer outfalls are methods that can be used to reach audiences less likely to read standard materials. Directing materials or outreach programs toward specific groups of commercial, industrial, and institutional entities likely to have significant storm water impacts is also recommended. For example, information could be provided to restaurants on the effects of grease clogging storm drains and to auto garages on the effects of dumping used oil into storm drains.

What Are Appropriate Measurable Goals?

Measurable goals, which are required for each minimum control measure, are intended to gauge permit compliance and program effectiveness. The measurable goals, as well as the BMPs, should reflect the needs and characteristics of the operator and the area served by its small MS4. Furthermore, they should be chosen using an integrated approach that fully addresses the requirements and intent of the minimum control measure. An integrated approach for this minimum measure could include the following measurable goals:

<u>Target Date</u>	<u>Activity</u>
1 year.....	Brochures developed (bilingual, if appropriate) and distributed in water utility bills; a storm water hotline in place; volunteer educators trained.
2 years.....	A web site created; school curricula developed; storm drains stenciled.
3 years.....	A certain percentage of restaurants no longer dumping grease and other pollutants down storm sewer drains.
4 years.....	A certain percentage reduction in litter or animal waste detected in discharges.

For Additional Information

Contact

- ☎ U.S. EPA Office of Wastewater Management
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 - Internet: www.epa.gov/owm/sw/phase2

Reference Documents

- ☎ Storm Water Phase II Final Rule Fact Sheet Series
 - Internet: www.epa.gov/owm/sw/phase2
- ☎ Storm Water Phase II Final Rule (64 FR 68722)
 - Internet: www.epa.gov/owm/sw/phase2
 - Contact the U.S. EPA Water Resource Center
 - Phone: 202 260-7786
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